Strategy for implementation of the
Concordat to support the career development of researchers

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Strategy for implementation of the *Concordat to support the career development of researchers*

1 Introduction

Glyndŵr University aims to act in accordance with the principles of the *Concordat to support the career development of researchers*:

1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research
2. Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world class research
3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment
4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and life long learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career
5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and life long learning
6. Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers
7. The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK

This strategy is concerned with putting these principles into practice, for supporting staff whose responsibilities include conducting research. It is recognised that this covers a range of different disciplines; levels of training, experience and responsibility; types of contract (fixed or open ended, full or part time); and career expectations and intentions. This revised strategy document replaced the strategy published in 2013, following significant changes in the University's structures and in its academic profile.

The Action Plan associated with the continuing implementation of the Concordat is set out in **Annex 1**.

2 Context

The strategy is informed by and is consistent with the University's Strategic Framework 2015-2020. The Strategic Framework states that 'We will engender the confidence, academic vitality and financial sustainability in Glyndwr University that underpins regional economic success and meets the needs of future generations of students.' The commitments and targets associated with that overall objective are set out in the interrelated themes of Learning, teaching and the student experience; Partnerships, engagement and impact; Research, scholarship and innovation; and Sustainability and success.

Targets most closely associated with research capacity and performance are:

- A high percentage of academic staff with doctorates, approaching 100% in some areas by 2020

- By 2020 a wide range of staff involved in the supervision of research degrees and a well-developed programme of staff development to support them
- A year on year rise in PGR student numbers across the planning period, reaching at least 75 by 2020
- To have built a track record in supervision sufficient to submit a successful application for Research Awarding powers to QAA by 2025

The actions supporting achievement of the targets are:

A16 – We will grow our research base gradually, working with industry and practitioners to cement partnerships that build our research skills and capacity and gear external funding for innovation.

A17 – We will develop our partnerships in research with other universities, developing networks that support greater innovation and stretch our research horizons.

A18 – We will provide academic staff with opportunities for research, professional practice, and consultancy.

A19 - We will ensure that all our curricula are research and business informed and remain up-to-date through the scholarship of staff.

A20 – We will develop our profile in the awarding of research degrees.

The University's Strategic Action Plan for Research, Scholarship and Innovation is a working document setting out more specific targets and actions, developed through discussion in the Research and Enterprise Committee and guiding the development of academic Schools' own plans. The targets relate in particular to the proportion of academic staff able to engage and engaging in productive research activity and engaging with external peers and practitioners.

Following significant changes in structures and academic profile, the University's current focus is on supporting less experienced staff across the four academic Schools to begin and to further develop their engagement in research activity. A university-wide mentoring scheme is a key element of that support.

The University's Strategy for implementation of the Concordat is consistent with the RCUK Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training.

3   Strategic Aims

A Gap Analysis undertaken in 2016 identified the following as priority areas for development:

1. Training and development for project managers (and any other managers of contract research staff)
2. Ensuring that staff are aware of their own responsibilities in relation to professional development and career progression
3. Establishing a more structured framework to support individuals in planning training and development and recording achievements
4. Enhancing the effectiveness of induction for new staff
5. Establishing a structured mentoring scheme
6. Ensuring that staff have access to opportunities for external networking and collaboration

4   Recent developments

The University's Strategy for implementation of the Concordat was first adopted in May 2010 and updated in 2013. Progress in implementing the strategy is monitored by the University's Research and Enterprise Committee (REC). The University submitted its 2 year review report in November 2015, indicating that the University's then financial circumstances and a restructuring exercise had severely curtailed implementation of the Concordat Action Plan. A further report was submitted in August 2016 setting out revised actions and targets.

Actions taken in 2016/17 to date are:

- Introduction of Work Allocation Model, which makes more explicit the nature and extent of research activity expected of individual staff
- Staff Engagement Survey, not focussed on research activity but providing insights into perceptions about engagement and career development
- Confirmation that the research element of academic job descriptions is always evident
- Researcher Mentoring scheme approved for introduction
- Graduate Teaching Assistant initiative established

The new structure and staffing complement is now well established and the University's financial situation more secure, and this strategy document therefore seeks to consolidate and develop the actions taken immediately following the appointment of the Researcher Development Tutor in May 2016.

The updated Action Plan approved by REC in February 2017 follows as **Annex 1**.

5   Arrangements for Managing Implementation

The Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for research has overall responsibility for implementation of the Concordat. Direct operational responsibility is delegated as appropriate, to Heads of School, Heads of University Research Centres, The Researcher Development Tutor, the REC, the Governors' HR Committee, and operational managers responsible for human resources and research support. Communication with staff regarding the Concordat and its implementation is effected direct communication with researchers and their managers, through *Glynfo*, and through induction programmes for new staff.

Implementation of the Strategy is supported by an annual Action Plan which identifies key issues and associated requirements. The Action Plan is agreed and progress monitored by the REC with recommendations made to Academic Board as required.

Key issues for inclusion in the annual Action Plan are identified through consultation meetings with Heads of University Research Centres, staff surveys, the University's performance review process and through discussion in fora such as the University Research Degrees Committee and the REC.

STRES1617008 Annex 1

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
Action Plan 2016-2018
[February 2017]

This action plan supports the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Key issues arising from the gap analysis conducted in 2016 concerned ensuring effective research leadership, mentoring, induction for new staff, supporting staff in planning and recording personal and professional development, and encouraging external networking and collaboration.

The key areas for development in 2016/17 and 2017/18 are to be:

Action	Concordat Principle(s)	Responsible	By When	Progress to February 2017
Update Strategy for the Implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Head of Research Services / Research & Enterprise Committee	October 2016	Completed February 2017 (following appointment of PVC Research).
HR team to ensure that the research element of academic job descriptions is always evident	1	HR Director	October 2016	Completed.
Periodic training of research managers (project leaders and line managers) in employment issues including fixed term contracts; appraisal and provision of guidance re. training opportunities; ensuring colleagues' contributions to policy and practice are recognised	2, 4, 5	Researcher Development Tutor / HR Director / URC Heads	ongoing	To be implemented whenever a 'GUV' [staff recruitment] form indicates appointment of contract research staff. Head of Research Services to prepare training checklist.
Ensure that support for researchers and research activity is included in induction for new staff	3	Researcher Development Tutor / HR Director / URC Heads	ongoing	HR to include contributions from research support staff in induction events. Head of Research Services to prepare induction checklist.
Explore what is involved in obtaining membership of Athena SWAN within the next twelve months with a view to putting in place an action plan to work towards applying for membership	6	Researcher Development Tutor	July 2017	On track; meeting arranged with colleagues at Chester University to explore in more detail.
Establish Mentoring Scheme: identify prospective mentors and provide training; begin pilot of mentoring	3, 4	Researcher Development Tutor / HR Director / URC Heads	July 2017	Approved January 2017. 3 initial mentors to receive training by July 2017.
Review Mentoring Scheme and further develop in 2017/18	3, 4	Researcher Development	December 2017	Postpone to July 2018 to enable pilot to run.

		Tutor / HR Director / URC Heads		
Monitor establishment of a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) initiative across the University and identify training and development requirements	4	Researcher Development Tutor	March 2017	Initiative launched January 2017 (3 GTAs, in Criminology, Psychology and Youth & Community initially). Review of training and development requirements to be completed by July 2017.
Ensure relevant training and development for GTA staff is available and included in annual programme for delivery	4	Researcher Development Tutor	October 2017	To be completed by December 2017 following review.
Consult with researchers to gain feedback on implementation of Concordat	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Researcher Development Tutor / Head of Research Services	May 2017 / annual	Staff and student online surveys in preparation.
Develop specific Action Plan to maximise effectiveness of the Vitae RDF as a tool for staff and students, including consideration of its working in parallel with Simitive software which charts student CPD engagement	3, 5	Researcher Development Tutor	February 2017	Postponed to July 2017. 'Simitive' system not yet implemented.
Assist staff in developing external networking and collaboration opportunities	3, 7	URC Heads / Researcher Development Tutor	ongoing	Academic Schools' plans to be discussed with URC Heads.